

IS GRADE INFLATION A PROBLEM AT ST. ANDREWS?

BY HOLLY ALLEN

Undergraduate grades have sky-rocketed at American institutions since the mid-sixties. A-minus is reported as the average grade at Stanford. At Harvard, 82 percent of the 1974 graduating class was awarded a cum laude or better. Yale banished the F from its grade scale for one year in order to encourage studies outside of chosen majors. In 1975, ever over half of the University of Virginia's graduates made the dean's list.

The grade distribution at St. Andrews seems to reflect this trend, although the inflation is reported minimal and far behind that of the "Ivy-

Leaguers." Since surveys on grade distribution were first conducted here in 1973, the incidence of A's awarded to spring term students has risen about ten percent.

At the same time, the number of C's and D's distributed has respectively fallen approximately eight and four percent.

Registrar James Stephens reported Tuesday that St. Andrews' grades were in line with the distributions reported in 1976 by 22 North Carolina institutions of higher education. St. Andrews ranked close to the mean among the ten participating small private institutions at all grade levels, with the exception of its lower incidence of F's given.

"I don't think the grade inflation problem is a serious one," Stephens said, adding, however, that "It's a problem to be concerned about."

Perhaps most sensitive to the nationwide grade inflation problem are those students who have returned to St. Andrews after an extended absence from collegiate studies.

Judy Guerry returned to St. Andrews in 1976, 14 years after completing two years at Mary Washington College in Fredericksburg, Virginia. She states that a stronger motivation to make high grades (now that she's paying the tuition) makes it hard for her to tell whether good grades come more easily. But, she said, the attitude that's

supported grade inflation "is reflected in the drop add option, I think. Another thing—the cut business.

"It seems that things like that reflect the general attitude of making things easier, rather than abiding by a strict set of rules. And that sort of thing almost has to come out in the grades," she explained. "I'm not sure whether that's good or bad, but you wouldn't want that flexibility to go so far as to water down the content of a course to make it easier."

Guerry also mentioned noticing a growing laxity on failing students.

"I don't think as many people fail for not doing their work," she said. "There used to be no compromise about aht

at all. Now you can talk about it. People don't fail at the rate they did when I was in school (at Mary Washington)."

Return student Phillip Blundell also says that a greater motivation prevents him from judging inflation clearly.

"I think a little extra age goes a long way," said Blundell, who is now married and the father of two children. "It's easier for me to buckle down to study."

He noted, though, that SAS 401 "was not easy." He must make three A's to graduate with a satisfactory g.p.a. and still finds that a challenge after a seven year absence from St. Andrews.

One former student who has (Continued on page 2)

THE LANCE

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Monday Series Presents Puppet Theatre

Monday, January 30 at 6:30 p.m., the St. Andrews Puppet Theatre will be presenting a program as part of the Vardell Monday Night Arts Series. The Puppet Theatre is a Winter Term course taught by Brad Ford of the Theatre Department.

Monday's performance will include *Alex and his very bad day*, a humorous look into a bad day in the life of a small boy in Anytown, U.S.A., *Metrics can be fun*, a play that introduces the basic concept of the metric system through a series of fables; and *the Reluctant Dragon*, a fable showing you can't judge a dragon by its skin. The fifteen students in the class have rewritten the scripts for puppet use, designed and built

the puppets for the plays.

The troupe will be taking their shows to about 10 elementary and middle schools in Scotland County. "We wanted to do something for children which is both educational and entertaining," Ford said. "We are using the success of the Muppets on Sesame Street as a barometer that measures the success of puppets as a teaching tool."

The school tour coordinator is Courtney Ebbinghouse. Ed Hendrickson is the designer of *Metrics*; Nancy Hinkle is the Editor. For *the Reluctant Dragon*, Karen Eades is the Designer and Teresa Tallent is the Editor. Linda Marrow is Designer and Editor of *Alex*.



CONSTRUCTION CONTINUES on the Belk Bell Tower and other renovation projects despite the wet weather. (Photo by David Swanson.)

Accident Nearly Fatal

If they had all been killed, they would have gone out as celebrities across the state in every newspaper and evening show. As it was, Mark Six, Dennis O'Toole, and Steve Newton will be quite happy to remain in the rather dull statistical category of those who managed to total their car without serious injury. They would be quick to point out that this state of affairs was not their fault.

Driving to the Pizza Inn for lunch, yesterday afternoon, the trio, in Six's grey VW (affectionately known as "Rommel" before his demise) were broadsided by the dispatcher for the Scotland County Ambulance Service. The car then flipped at the intersection of South Main and Armoury Streets and flew

This Week

TONIGHT: Basketball at Methodist College, 7:30 p.m.
Women's Basketball at Mt. Olive College, 7:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 27: Library Story Theatre: Presented by the Education W18 Class, 8 p.m. LA Auditorium.

Highlands Hall Dance - \$1 Admission - 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 28: Library Story Theatre, 2 p.m. LA Auditorium. Basketball: St. Andrews vs Greensboro College, 7:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 29: CUB Film Series: "Monty Python and the Holy Grail", anarchy in the Middle Ages, Wilmington Main Lounge. 25 cents admission.

MONDAY, JANUARY 30: Women's Basketball: Methodist College, 7:00 p.m. Foreign Students Meeting. Orange Lounge,

8:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 1: Women's Basketball: at St. Augustine's College, 7:00 p.m.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 3: Winter Term ends. Basketball: at Virginia Wesleyan College, 8:00 p.m.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 4: Basketball at Christopher Newport College, 8:00 p.m.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5: CCC Ski Trip. Concert: George Shearing at Scotland High School.